

MILES, NELSON A.

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Speeches Honoring Abraham Lincoln

Nelson A. Miles

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The Rockhambeau

Washington D.C.

March 12 1925.
Mr Albert H. Griffith

Fisk Wisconsin

My Dear Sir

In reply to
your letter I do not
know the post office
address of the parties
mentioned in your letter,
and do not find their names

in the City Telephone Directory.

Very Truly,

Nelson A. Miles

address of Gen. Nelson A. Miles before the Lions' Club,
Chicago, Illinois, Feb. 12, 1925.

President Townley, Your Excellency, Vice President and
Mrs, Dawes, Gentlemen of the Lions Club and
Distinguished Guests:

I appreciate the honor as well as the pleasure of meeting this distinguished gathering this evening. I confess I was somewhat mystified on receiving an invitation from the "Lions Clubs of Illinois". I have had some experience with the mountain lions of the Rocky and Sierra Madra Mountains, of the Great West, but never encountered the human lions of Illinois. My experience is not, however, like that of a man who lived in a remote section of our country, where he had had no advantage for education. A circus visited the town where he was living and he went with others to see the show. He saw the elephants, camels, lions and tigers, while the huge giraffe rached his long neck round and came near capturing and destroying his straw hat. The native went away in amusement, and his only remark was "there ain't no such animals." My experience is quite different. I have met with pleasure the lion-hearted American men of pure minds and strong will. Men of true principles and with lion courage to maintain them.

You, gentlemen, are entitled to the gratitude of the American people for your sagacity, courage and enterprise in building up the great business interests of our country and contributing to its prosperity.

Here near the center of our great Republic, by business and professional enterprise, you have done your full duty towards making our country prosperous and great.

When we compare our condition with that of other parts of the world, we can but rejoice that we are American citizens. One hundred millions of people recognizing no foreign or imperial governing power, living under the sublime power of American sovereign citizenship, and enjoying more independence, security, prosperity and happiness than any people have ever enjoyed in the world's history. We naturally study the cause, and pray for its continuance.

We may well ask what has produced this great prosperity, superior to that enjoyed by other peoples of the world. If we were to journey around the world tonight, we would find in Japan 65,000,000 of people, and the price of common labor is 15 cents per day, and skilled labor from 22 to 32 cents per day. Cross over to China and we find 450,000,000 of people where the price of labor has never been ten cents per day. The condition of the people of India is not much better, and I have mentioned more than one-half of the human race. The price of labor in Russia has never been 20 cents per day. The price of skilled labor in Germany is 38 cents per day, and the price of labor in Europe is not one-half of what it is in America.

We may well ask what has produced this universal nationwide prosperity, and the answer will be:

First - Education -

What has enabled our millions of farmers to cultivate their lands intelligently and scientifically, and produce rich harvests? - The answer is education.

What has enabled our manufacturers to utilize machinery skillfully and to their great advantage? - Education.

What has enabled our merchants to exchange the products of different sections of the world advantageously? - Education.

What has been our great blessing in the preservation of life and health? - Education.

Why have our millions of people comfortable homes? - Education.

What has given one hundred millions of Americans more independence, freedom, security, prosperity and happiness than any people have ever enjoyed? - Education.

What has made the mighty Republic of America supremely great? - Education.

We may well consider and should remember how universal education has produced these bountiful blessings in our country. The great majority of our people are educated and are a reading, intelligent, patriotic people devoted to the welfare and perpetuity of our beloved country and its blessed institutions.

What then is the sacred duty of all our sovereign citizens, - it is to appreciate the priceless blessings achieved by our fathers by valor and sacrifice and to cherish, as you and all good citizens have thus far maintained and preserved them. We cannot over-estimate the blessings vouchsafed to us by the fathers, and preserved by you and your fellow citizens, and I trust and pray that you may have the glory of handing them down through the corridors of time and to the generations that shall follow.

Fortunate are we to be citizens of this mightiest of Republics and enjoying all the advantages and blessings of sovereign citizenship. Possibly those who have suffered oppression and have been deprived of their liberty best appreciate the

blessings of independence. Our fathers fled from the rule of tyranny to the freedom of the new world.

They constructed with consummate sagacity the great citadel of political liberty; they inaugurated the most perfect government ever created by human wisdom.

While the whole world is applauding our achievements, copying our constitution, adopting our principles and appreciating with profound reverence our system of government, shall we Americans drift back into apathy, communism, chaos and decay? We have as a people and a Nation, a far higher and holier mission.

There can be no security in universal democracy without universal intelligence and true patriotism.

Patriotic citizenship can be exercised only with intelligence, and universal education is absolutely essential in the exercise of our sovereign duties and responsibilities. Hence the founders of our government had not only the wisdom to frame our Constitution, but were mindful of the importance of universal education with an absolutely free and untrammelled press.

Washington's wise admonitions will ever be the beacon lights in human progress, *and* none shines forth clearer or purer than his words: "Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all; promote as an object of primary importance institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

The words of the immortal Lincoln are equally profound and applicable to the present day.

To guide and control the affairs of this mightiest of Republics, we need sovereign citizens inspired by the true principles of our fathers, patriots of exalted character, ability and integrity.

Our sentiments may be expressed on the following lines.

"Bring me men to match my mountains,
Bring me men to match my plains,
Men with empires in their purpose,
And new eras in their brains.
Bring men to match my prairies,
Men to match my inland seas,
Men whose thought shall pave a highway
Up to ampler destinies;
Pioneers to clear thought's marshlands,
And to cleanse old error's pen,
Bring me men, bring me men!"

I wish you every prosperity and happiness!
